

## CAN MIGRANTS INTERFACE WITH THE CYBER-COMMUNITY?

by Rubén Martinez

Emmy-award winning journalist, poet, and performer Rubén Martinez is an associate editor for Pacific News Service. The *New Americans* (<http://zonezero.com/exposiciones/fotografos/newam/default.html>), an on-line project featuring text by Martinez and photographs by Joseph Rodriguez, was one of the first new media projects funded by CCH. At last November's Federation of State Humanities Councils' annual conference, Martinez discussed the pitfalls and potential of such projects in his informal address on "The New Public Dialogue," excerpted here. Martinez's new book on Mexican migrants will be published by Metropolitan/Holt this Fall.—Editor

The *New Americans* started out as an attempt on the part of myself and photographer Joseph Rodriguez to work on issues of public dialogue—in this case, specifically, over the issue of Mexican immigration to the United States....

In 1994, when Governor [Pete Wilson] signed Proposition 187, it was a really divisive time in California—there was a clear dividing line, both politically and socially. Things have changed a lot since then, because the economy has changed a lot, and indeed Prop. 187, which would have denied public education and health care to undocumented immigrants in California, was thrown out by the courts as unconstitutional. So Prop. 187 is no longer there... and the terms of our public life in California have changed: You don't quite hear the same politics of xenophobia occurring. But in the mid '90s, it was a shrill political voice...

Joe [Rodriguez] and I felt that this "dialogue" [about Mexican immigration] was actually a monologue, that ultimately the people who were talking about 187 were all non-immigrants. Prop. 187 was about immigrants, and immigrants didn't have a voice in the debate. We thought: Let's do something as journalists, as documentarians, to bring this voice in. So we took to the road, following migrant families across the United States...

We wanted to do several things at once with *New Americans*. Certainly, we wanted to have the immigrants speak for themselves. But we are documentarians—we didn't want to make this rhetorical, or simply about politics and immigration. We wanted to present a human image. We were wide-eyed with the possibilities of the new technology... The goal we set for ourselves was to first document the



Benson, North Carolina.  
(Photo by Joseph Rodriguez)

hometown [of migrant workers] and then to go on the road and follow them across the country—families in California, families in Arkansas, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Missouri. We set the goal for ourselves of filing daily dispatches during the North American tour, a crazy amount of work, 14 to 16 hours a day, 7 days a week... We wanted photographs, texts, audio

clips... It was all context, ultimately, for the dialogue [we had hoped to create]...

Where this project failed... was that we wanted to have chats—we wanted to use the new technology for the actual dialogue itself. So the dream was to have [the migrants] actually present on-line, just like you'd find [a pop star] at an AOL chat... To put up a virtual auditorium—that was our idea—to have the immigrants talking to the cyber-community... Bringing voices together. And we did indeed set up a special chat room, but where the failure occurred was in terms of audience development...

The reason our dialogue failed is that the immigrant community has a serious issue, obviously, in terms of access to the internet. They are a working class, migrant community that just isn't around computers at all. Period. And as far as organizing the other side of the dialogue, we needed to target ourselves. Who is our audience? Activists? Academics? How do we get the word out?...

*Continued on page two.*

## CYBERSKINS: LIVE AND INTERACTIVE

by Buffy Sainte-Marie  
(reprinted with permission of the  
*Native American Village at*  
[www.IMdiversity.com](http://www.IMdiversity.com))

On an airplane, my Powerbook is singing to me in Lakota, while the words to the song appear onscreen in both Lakota and English.

In the Canadian Rockies, Indians carrying portable computers trudge through a herd of elk and into the Banff Center for the Arts where the "Drumbeats to Drumbytes" thinktank confronts the reality of online life as it affects Native artists.

A week later in Bismarck, North Dakota, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium votes 'yes' to V-SAT technology that will facilitate distance learning in and out of various Indian communities and 30 Indian colleges.

Across Canada, thousands of First Nations children network their observations and life experiences into mainstream education, as the Cradleboard Teaching Project—Kids From Kanata partnership provides both Native content and

connectivity to schools as far away as Hawaii and Baffin Island.

I make a commercial record in a tipi on the Saskatchewan plains,

...it's digital and it's  
Indian made.

and CBC television films the event for international broadcast. Navajo E-mail markets crafts to 40 foreign countries. A six-foot high painting of Indian elders graces the front office of the American Indian College Fund in Washington, D.C.: it's digital and it's Indian made.

The digital scene in Indian country at the moment is a microcosm of the way it is most everywhere else, with people at various stages of expertise and enthusiasm going through the big shift. Issues of sovereignty are often the first to come up among Native intellectuals,

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# CYBERSKINS: LIVE AND INTERACTIVE

*Continued from page one.*

and the specter of digital colonialism frightens some and challenges others. Questions of control and ownership arise of course, as they do in the mainstream, but with perhaps a sharper edge, given the facts of Native American history. Indian educators, artists, elders, women, tribal leaders, and business people have plenty on our minds when it comes to counterbalancing past misinterpretations with positive realities, and past exploitations with future opportunities.

The reality of the situation is that we're not all dead and stuffed in

some museum with the dinosaurs: we are Here in this digital age. We have led the pack in a couple of areas (digital music and online art). Although our potential at the moment exceeds the extensiveness of our community computer usage, our projects are already bearing fruit, we expect to prosper and to contribute, and we will defend our data.

Among Indian people online as elsewhere, we continue to observe the usual gangs of unknowledgeable non-Indian and/or "I-was-an-Indian-in-my-last-life" opportunists and exploiters, who now are upgrading their acts, trying to take

advantage of rumored tax breaks and other scams in the cyber-sector of Indian country; but we are pretty much used to this 'vapor-speak'

*Although our potential at the moment exceeds the extensiveness of our community computer usage, our projects are already bearing fruit, we expect to prosper and to contribute, and we will defend our data.*

However, I am glad to report that usually this observation does not interfere with honest deals among knowledgeable people of different races; and personally I do believe that we're smart enough to know who our friends are; and they come in all colors.

Sometimes I am asked, where did all the brain and fire of the sixties American Indian activism go? In my observation, in Canada we went into every field; but in the United States, where things were far more dangerous, those of us who were not killed, imprisoned, put out of business or otherwise sacrificed to the uranium industry, went into education. If I have a message in this scant overview, it is this: real Indian people are rising to the potential of the technology, in school and out. We were born for this moment and we are solidly behind our pathfinders.

*—Buffy Sainte-Marie was born on a Cree reservation in Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, Canada. She holds a Ph.D. in Fine Art from UMass and degrees in both oriental philosophy and teaching—influences which form the backbone of her music, visual art, and social activism.*

## CAN MIGRANTS INTERFACE...?

*Continued from page one.*

We finished [this project] in 1998. Knowing what I know now, in terms of the internet's capabilities



Fort Hancock, Texas.  
(Photo by Joseph Rodriguez)

and of documentary work in this era, I have a vision for another project...

I as a writer, and Joseph as a photographer, have an uncomfortable relationship with our subjects. I've always felt an uneasy sense of how I wield power over my subjects: I interview you, and I take down notes from the conversation, or record the interview for more accuracy, and I pull one sentence here, a few words there... you can make anyone say anything you want. A photographer does this also, through lighting, the angle, a medium shot, long shot. We are



Tapia Family, Warren, Arkansas.  
(Photo by Joseph Rodriguez)

manipulating reality; my quote from you is not reality—it's my point of view, your reality filtered through me... So, Joe and I sat down and decided to push it further. Let's get a bunch of computers, and set them up all over a [small town]—in the library, at the real estate office, set them up at the pool hall, the high school. And we'll have scanners, ways to upload photographs,

audio, video. And while Joe and I are interviewing people and photographing them and uploading their audio—representing the town one way, on-line, raising our issues—the town is also representing *itself*. I can see it happening, because often I get responses—letters, e-mails—and there will always be somebody who says "I was born in the place you are talking about. Let *me* tell you how it is." I always listen to that voice. That's the idea... There have been a few projects that have looked in this direction, but not nearly enough...

Things are moving so rapidly. There has been some sort of shift,

*The buzz back then was that it was a new democracy—the democratization of the world through cyberspace. You don't hear that too much anymore...*

almost overnight. Remember when we were all just getting our internet accounts? The buzz back then was that it was a *new democracy*—the democratization of the world through cyberspace. You don't hear that too much anymore. What you do hear is "The Nasdaq is up, the Nasaq is down, Cisco Systems this, Cisco Systems that," blah, blah, blah. It's as if everything is about the business, commercialized. But I know this medium can take our work to the next level, if we build the audience up correctly, if we make it easy and friendly for everybody to take part... I think we need to explore this model of interactivity, of creating this new public dialogue, because God knows every state has communities that aren't interfacing.

phenomenon, having lived with it these past 500 years. "Beware of White man bearing good ideas and grant proposals" is a tacit refrain we laugh about over the phone.

## OF STRATEGY AND STORIES

by James Quay  
Executive Director

For the past six months, the CCH board and staff have been engaged in a strategic planning process designed to explore how CCH can more effectively serve the people of California through the humanities. We've re-examined our mission, talked to those who know our work and those who don't, brainstormed and debated what we might do in the future. The final plan will be equal shares of re-affirmation and bold departure, building on the Council's 25 years of experience, yet making moves that will change the way we go about our work.

We intend to spend most of the next six months reaching out to our existing network and beyond, testing and refining our plans to make the plan work for everyone. It's clearly too soon to speak with any confidence about what the final plan will look like, but I can tell you that stories have figured powerfully in our discussions. The word "story" appears seven centuries ago as a shortened form of the word "history," and over the next four centuries develops less formal connotations, from the recital of events alleged to have happened to the recital of fictional events to outright lies.

Fictional stories usually have an inherent sense of direction, from "once upon a time" to "they lived happily ever after." When we're asked to tell the story of our life, or of our family, neighborhood, town, state or nation, we're being asked to shape a multitude of experiences into a coherent frame, something that gives those experiences shape or meaning. "What's the story?" we ask, as in "what does this mean?" What thread of purpose runs through the events that make up the life of a town, a state, a neighborhood? Who gets to tell that story? Whose story gets left out?

One way of giving coherence to the myriad projects CCH has funded over the past 25 years is to see them as pieces of California's story. We think that asking for stories means asking people to place their experience, however temporarily, however provisionally, into meaningful shapes that can be shared with others. That act of sharing begs for the reciprocal act of listening, and that act invites response and discussion. And pretty soon, you have a public humanities project.

The strategic plan is almost done. Watch this space for the rest of the story.

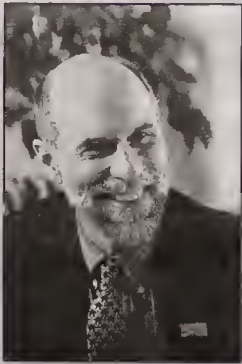


Photo by Jason Doty



# TECHTALK: A BLUEPRINT OF WHO WE ARE?

By Sally Eisele and Claire Greene

*So she said to me "The server's down."*

*I said, "We're fully compliant."*

*"I want access!" she said.*

*I said, "Look, there are three killer aps not yet up and running. Give me whatever it takes. I want a pipeline, and...and...(I don't know the lingo—right—so I start faking it.) Give me a pipeline to the Web. Give me an internet data base!"*

*And she found out. "You're talking gobbledygook..."*

*And I said, "Well so is the rest of the country."*

*—San Francisco humorist Charlie Varon*

Language is a mirror—Virginia Wolf once called it an echo—of ourselves and our history. It's a blueprint of who we are and where we came from.

"The fact is, from the railroad to the bicycle to the auto to the airplane to rockets, every technology has left its mark on the language," said California linguist and commentator Geoffrey Nunberg. Expressions like "full steam ahead," "hitting all cylinders" and "lift off" are all linguistic reminders of other technological revolutions.

In today's cyberculture, technology isn't just changing the way we do business, it's changing the words we use and how we use them. And it's happening as fast as we can read our email.

"It's having a tremendous influence," said *Wired Style Guide* editor Constance Hale. "We're seeing words come into mainstream language daily and whip through the culture of the net and email and a lot of people are having trouble figuring out what the words mean."

Let alone how to spell them.

"At *Wired* we have rollicking and very tumultuous arguments about which words are going to go into the style guide and how we're going to spell them," said Hale. "It took us about a year to decide how we were going to spell 'email,' which is probably the most common of all the new words."

Even people who use this new cyberspeak daily in the workplace are having trouble with the pace at which new words are entering their vocabulary.

"We laugh constantly at some of these buzzwords that are coming out," said one Silicon Valley dot-commer. "Bricks and clicks, B2B, B2C, BeetabeetabeetabeetaB2B2C... I mean what does that mean? Sometimes you're not at the edge of that lingo and you're trying to catch up."

Even the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the most venerable dictionaries in the world, is scrambling at the pace with which new words are being coined. So much so that the company recently opened an American office to try

and stay on top of the lingo and appointed former Random House new word editor Jesse Sheidlower to head it.

"One of the things we're trying to do right now is record the sort of informal language or technical language that used to be omitted from the OED," Sheidlower said.



Bay Area journalists Sally Eisele and Claire Greene are co-producers of the Word of Mouth project, a public radio series on the rapidly changing language of American English. The impact of technology on language is one of 13 segments planned for the series, which will begin distribution this spring. The project was funded in part by CCH and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

"One of the reasons this office was started is to be able to research more thoroughly these things like American slang and colloquial usage that for a long time have been ignored or just not taken seriously by linguists. And now we're able to look very carefully at this and to treat this with as much thoroughness as we do any other branch of the language."

Some of these words will stay with us. More will fall by the wayside with the passage of time. What may be the more lasting linguistic legacy of this cyber-revolution, Sheidlower and others believe, is the effect it is having on the way we communicate.

"The technology isn't something that just influences the language, it's also the means by which we communicate," explained Nunberg. "Whether you're talking about email or web sites or PowerPoint—which is, arguably, a technology that's had more impact on the discourse of power than anything since print—all of these have had an enormous effect on the way people use the language to communicate."

But is it improving our ability to communicate? Not necessarily, say some linguists.

"Every time I send an email, somebody seems to get mad at me," said Seth Lehrer, a linguist at Stanford University. "The nature of communication has changed so much, yet in many ways people are communicating less and understanding each other less," he said.

There's no question that email communication, which has be-

come the predominant form of workplace communication in just a few short years, is different from any previous form of written communication. And it has a kind of language of its own. Written too formally, a simple note can become a reprimand. Use a cold tone, and praise can become a

stuff the best are the young people—who grew up with computers and keyboards.

Sean Amaro, 21, started his first web site when he was 16. Currently a senior at Menlo College, he does web-site consulting and graphic design in his spare time.

"What I love about the Internet is that it provides a way for people to communicate without race, gender or age being the first statement made about yourself," he says. "Digital dialogues make people feel uninhibited."

Amaro uses email, chat rooms and instant messaging as his primary method of communication. And he prefers it that way.

"Without email, I could never stay as close to my friends and

*... In a way, we're becoming more literate... I think we're communicating using the written word more than we ever have!...*

family as I am now. I'm limited only by my typing speed."

Still, the fact that technology is getting so many people to sit down and actually think about typing is not lost on the OED's Jesse Sheidlower. He says, in a way, we're becoming more literate.

"I think that we're communicating using the written word more than we ever have. I don't think there's any question about that, despite that in the past people used to write letters all the time. In fact, the only people who used to write letters were the highly educated upper-class people who had the time and the literary training to do that. And now more and more people are writing who have never written before, and this is going to be a very big thing."

*Do I miss the days of going out and talking to non e-people in a non e-environment in a non-virtual space as it were? In a way I do. But when you're enveloped in a world that is really just a mouse click away you find the convenience is very seductive. —Varon*

back-handed compliment. Copy the boss, and the whole experience escalates unhappily. Ah, for the good old days of conversing at the company water cooler!

"The collapse of time that email and other things make possible

*The collapse of time that email makes possible has a real downside... I liked it better when we had the U.S. Mail creating intervals in our activities.*

has a real downside," adds Geoffrey Nunberg. "It used to be that you'd send a letter and you had two days before it got there and another day for the other person to compose a response and another two days before it got back to you, and it gave you a kind of space that was useful to have. There are times when I don't want to immediately respond to a letter. I liked it better when we had the U.S. Mail creating these intervals in our activities."

There's an age factor here too. The people who seem to do this



# Grants Awarded



Mandarins and Sino Americans Baseball Teams, ca. 1930s. The Mandarins baseball team was sponsored by the Chinese American Citizens' Alliance, a political activist organization that provided voice and mutual aid to the Chinatown community, as well as social activities for Chinese American youth. From the Family and Community project. (Courtesy of the Chinese American Museum and El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument.)

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### Conference on Southern Californian Indigenous Language and Culture

Sponsor: San Diego State University Foundation

Director: Margaret Field

Amount of Award: \$9,930 in outright funds

Many of Southern California's indigenous communities are in danger of losing their languages forever; some have only a handful of Native speakers left. This two-day weekend event, to take place June 2-3, 2000, at Mission Trails Park in San Diego, will bring Southern Californian Native communities together to discuss how to maintain and revitalize their languages and cultures. Some workshops will explore language-teaching methods (including Master-Apprentice programs and multimedia approaches), while other sessions will focus on such traditional elements as shawii (acorn mush), peon (a game of chance), and shinny (a form of stickball). This award will help fund staffing and publicity costs.

### Frame by Frame: Building Communities through Cinema

Sponsor: San Diego Public Library

Project Director: Lynn Whitehouse

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

How does a modern Californian community work to achieve unity within diversity? With growing populations of residents with Mexican, Latin American, Caribbean, Asian and Southeast Asian, African American, European American and American Indian heritage, as well as more recent immigrants of East and North African heritage, the communities served by the San Diego Central, City Heights Weingart, and Malcolm X libraries will have the chance to answer that question during the San Diego Public Library's second annual international film and video festival. During the first three Wednesdays of February, March, and April 2001, these three libraries will show films and videos that encourage community members to question and explore the unique cultures and values of their neighbors. Each screening will be followed by discussion led by a scholar or expert of the featured film's region. This award will help fund honoraria, publicity, and staffing for the series.

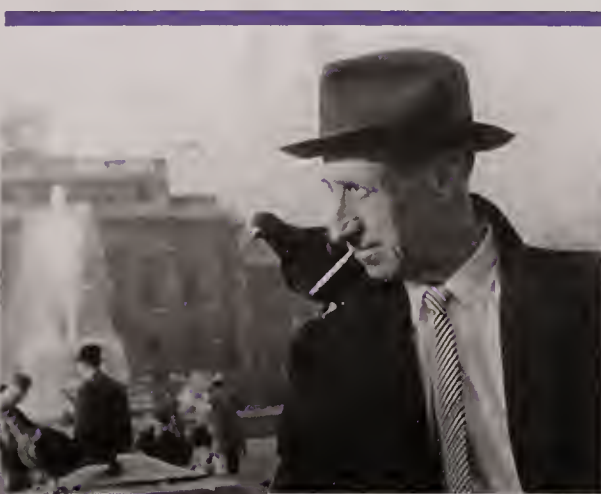
### Family and Community: The Role of Family, Civic, and Spiritual Support Networks in Building the Chinese American Community in Southern California

Sponsor: Friends of the Chinese American Museum

Project Director: Suellen Cheng

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Facing social and political ostracism and long-distance separation from friends and family, Chinese Americans in Southern California have formed community "support networks" of self-help organizations, clubs, schools, and religious institutions. They have also created such family support networks as extended families, trans-pacific families, and other forms of surrogate families. Featuring artifacts reflecting the religious, community, and family lives of Chinese Americans in Southern California from 1849 to present, this permanent exhibit will examine the Chinese American community-building experience; it will also feature the experiences of modern trans-pacific families, such as "astronauts" (parents who travel back and forth between the U.S. and their native country to maintain two households on two continents) and "parachute kids" (their teenage children who reside in the U.S. to pursue better opportunities for education). This award will support both publicity and staffing/scholars for the exhibit, which is scheduled to open in Dec. 2001.



ILWU leader Harry Bridges in London (Trafalgar Square), 1956. From The Life and Times of Harry Bridges project. (Courtesy of ILWU)

### Fire in the Library: Fire in the Mind—The Architecture of a Collective Vision: What Can We See?

Sponsor: Side Street Projects

Co-sponsor: Los Angeles Public Library, Downtown Branch

Director: Eugenia Butler

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Building upon the 20<sup>th</sup> century tradition of public conversation as art, as embodied in the salons of Gertrude Stein and the "talking-out-louds" of Buckminster Fuller, Los Angeles' Fire in the Library forums create public dialogue focused on topics at the intersection of contemporary art and culture in California. This award will help support honoraria and media costs for a public forum at the Los Angeles Central Library on June 16, addressing the present and future implications of living in a society where, increasingly, images matter more than words. The Architecture of a Collective Vision forum will bring together seven scholars—whose interests range from Pre-Columbian symbols, to hip-hop culture and iconography—for three hours of public conversation about visual literacy in our society; a series of four smaller community forums held in January through April 2001, will actively search out and include a diverse community of non-academic thinkers from the surrounding, under-served downtown district.



Participants at a 1999 Fire in the Library/Fires in Your Mind performance at Luckman Gallery, CSULA. (Photo by Ray Belis)

### The Life and Times of Harry Bridges

Sponsor: Kick in the Eye, Santa Monica

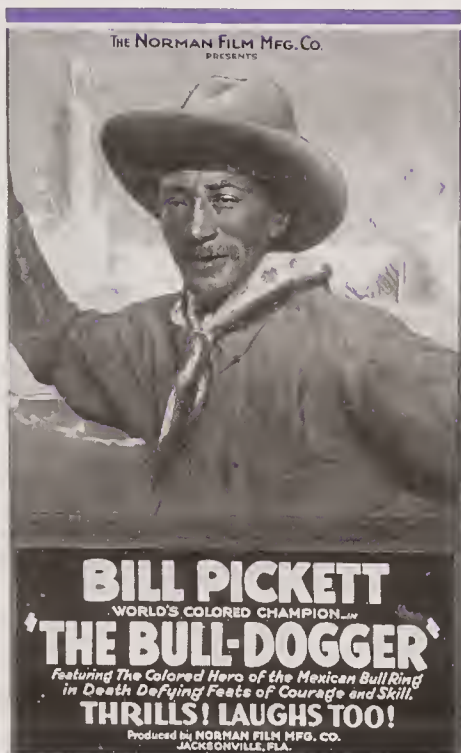
Project Director: Ian Ruskin

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Harry Bridges, who immigrated from Australia to San Francisco in 1920, made American history as a leader in the creation of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU). He also fought a 20-year battle, including four trials, for his own citizenship. This grant will help fund development of a Chautauqua program portraying Bridges' passion, struggles, and wicked sense of humor, featuring Bridges' own words and the words of his contemporaries. Independent scholar and actor Ian Ruskin, who will create the Chautauqua as well as portray Bridges, recently completed the radio documentary From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks: the Life and Times of Harry Bridges, which was also funded in part by the Council, and distributed by PRI Public Radio International last fall.



# Grants Awarded



Movie poster for Bill Pickett, "The Bull-dogger," 1922. Pickett's act featured his "bull-dogging" skills, whereby he would wrestle a steer to the ground by twisting its neck and sinking his teeth into its upper lip to pin the animal. From the Seeking El Dorado project. (Courtesy of the Autry Museum of Western Heritage)

## Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California

**Sponsor:** Autry Museum of Western Heritage, Los Angeles

**Director:** Kevin Mulroy

**Amount of Award:** \$10,000 in outright funds

From Spanish colonization in the 16<sup>th</sup>–18th centuries through to the Gold Rush and the migratory movements before and after World War II, people of African ancestry have played a key role in the West's development. Despite their contributions, African Americans have often been subject to discrimination, at times resulting in such civil unrest as the Watts riots and the 1992 Los Angeles uprisings. This award will help fund scholarship and publicity for a week of panel discussions, lecture presentations, and live performances focusing on the rich, turbulent history of African Americans in California, to take place at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, the California African American Museum, and at The World Stage, on February 20–25, 2001. Bringing together scholars of African American studies, as well as local civic leaders, cultural critics, clergy, poets, and musicians, the programs will focus on topics critical to the future of the region's African American community.

## Splendide Californie: French Artists' Impressions of the Golden State, 1786-1900

**Sponsor:** California Historical Society

**Project Director:** Scott A. Shields

**Amount of Award:** \$10,000 in outright funds

Some of the most widely recognized artists in California's history were French. Their work depicted California's commerce, topography, and people, and today ranks among the most memorable and significant records we have of California's early history. Splendide Californie aims to increase awareness of the important contributions the French have made to California's development, culture, and visual arts, and to recognize how, even after relocating to California, their heritage continued to play an important role in their lives and artistic production. This grant will help cover exhibit and administrative costs for this first-of-its-kind show, which will be at the California Historical Society in San Francisco on March 1–June 10, 2001, and at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento from June 23 to August 12, 2001.

## Talk dat Talk Storytelling Festival: A Celebration of the Oral Tradition

**Sponsor:** San Diego Public Library

**Project Director:** Marc Chery

**Amount of Award:** \$10,000 in outright funds

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has written that "Telling ourselves our own stories—interpreting the nature of our world to ourselves, asking and answering epistemological and ontological questions in our own voices and on our own terms—has as much as any factor been responsible for the survival of African-Americans and their culture." Believing that the stories we tell ourselves form our realities, and that the stories we share form the bridges that unite us, the San Diego Public Library and the Black Storytellers Association of San Diego will collaborate on this month-long, cross-cultural celebration and exploration of the art of storytelling. Each of the festival's eight events—occurring through the month of April 2001, at the Malcolm X Library & Performing Arts Center, and at the Cross Cultural Center—will integrate the work of culture bearers and scholars from a variety of communities and disciplines through performance/discussions, workshops, and interactive panel discussions. This grant will help to fund honoraria, publicity, and public program costs.

## MEDIA PROJECTS

### SCRIPTS

## Edward Weston: Photographs of Life

**Sponsor:** The International Documentary Association

**Project Director:** Jonathan Spaulding

**Amount of Award:** \$10,000 in outright funds

Edward Weston was a pioneer of California modernism in the first decades of the 20th century, combining traditions and innovations from Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia to create an expression of California's regional culture. In his affirmation of humanity's deep connection with the natural world, Weston is also one of California's great emissaries to our times. This one-hour film will include Weston's photographs; interviews with his family, friends, colleagues, and historians; and new location footage of the places he lived and worked. Weston's own letters and daybooks will form the core of the film's narrative. This media grant will help to fund honoraria for a panel of scholar-advisors who will guide research and writing of the script.



Hokaan Creation Story. (Courtesy of Ah-Mut PiPa Foundation.)

## Hokaan Creation Story

**Sponsor:** Ah-Mut PiPa Foundation

**Project Director:** Patricia Amlin

**Amount of Award:** \$10,000 in outright funds

This award will help fund research and writing of a script for an hour-long "ethnoanimated" digital video piece on the Creation History of the Southern Hokaan People (Quechan, Kamia, Cocopa, and Mohave of the Southwestern United States, and the PiPi, Kamia and Cocipa of Baja, California, Mexico). The video will combine the music, dance, and oration of Hokaan theater dating back thousands of years, with animated images designed from ancient Hokaan art—such as the geometric, abstract petroglyph patterns found at *Avi Kwaame* near Needles, California—to relate creation stories that are traditionally shared in song. The piece is intended for PBS broadcast and to be distributed to universities, schools, and tribes through the University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning.



The work of French artists, such as Léon Troussat's *Father Serra Celebrates Mass at Monterey* (oil on canvas, ca. 1870), provides a sweeping panorama of the Golden State from the mission era to the turn of the twentieth century. From the Splendide Californie project. (Courtesy of the California Historical Society)



# Grants Awarded

## PRODUCTION

### Cul de Sac: A Suburban War Story

Sponsor: Bay Area Video Coalition, San Francisco

Project Director: Gorrett Scott

Amount of Award: \$15,000 gift

Clairemont, a massive subdivision just north of downtown San Diego, once epitomized the single-family, ranch style homes associated with prosperity and stability in the years immediately following WWII. In 1994, four years after a final round of factory closures in San Diego's lucrative military-industrial complex devastated Clairemont's "California Dream," a 35-year-old unemployed veteran and plumber named Shawn Nelson stole a tank from his neighborhood National Guard Armory and went on an hour-long "rampage" through the streets of his hometown until he was killed by police—an act that many community residents openly considered "a cry for help." This media grant will support the post-production costs for an 80-minute video documentary exploring the economic



"Madman": 35-year-old vet and plumber Shawn Nelson's final, enigmatic act. From *Cul de Sac*. (Courtesy of KFMB-TV, San Diego)

### Daddies: A Documentary about Gay Fatherhood

Sponsor: Iris Films, Berkeley

Project Director: Johnny Symons

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Although there are currently about 10,000 foster children in California awaiting placement in permanent homes, until this year, state policy specifically recommended against placement of foster children into non-heterosexual households. This media grant will help support production costs of a one-hour documentary investigating the growing phenomenon of gay male families and their political and social impact on American culture. By following four different families, all headed by gay men, through their daily experiences, viewers will see how they negotiate complex and changing relationships with their extended families, their peers, and the gay and straight cultures around them. *Daddies* seeks to explore the value of alternative forms of family; the effects of race, gender, and sexual orientation on children; and the question of who decides on the right and ability to parent.



When a Vietnamese American video store owner displayed communist symbols in his store, the previously fragmented Vietnamese American community in Southern California came together in large demonstrations that allowed the catharsis of long-buried emotions and paved the way for renewed activism, political organization, and strengthened

### Saigon, USA

Sponsor: Visual Communications, Los Angeles

Project Director: Robert C. Winn and Lindsey Jong

Amount of Award: \$15,000 gift

Orange County's Westminster has grown into the de facto capital of a Vietnamese émigré community that is often divided by political and generational differences. In February 1999, when Vietnamese American Truong Van Tran hung a photo of Ho Chi Minh and a communist Vietnamese flag in his store, the reaction from both first and second-generation Vietnamese Americans was extreme and unprecedented: Protest intensified into 24-hour vigils and huge demonstrations that reverberated throughout Orange County and in Vietnamese American communities across North America. This award will help support the post-production costs of *Saigon, USA*, a one-hour documentary film that will examine the evolving identity of the Vietnamese American community in Southern California and what it means to these recent immigrants to be American.

### The Thursday Club

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco

Project Director: George Poul Csicsery

Amount of Award: \$15,000 gift

This grant will support post-production/editing of a one-hour film about the weekly lunch meetings of retired Oakland police officers, whose careers and anecdotes span decades of Oakland and San Francisco Bay Area history, from the Depression through WWII and the 50s. Often cast as villains, the retired officers now describe how they experienced such well-documented events as the 1967 Stop the Draft Week demonstrations in Oakland, the arrest of Huey Newton, an attack against Black Panther Party headquarters at night by rogue officers, and more. While focusing on the history of the Oakland Police Department from the late '40s through the mid-'70s, including its transformation from an Irish-dominated force to the multi-ethnic department of today, the film will also create a portrait of a complex community and subculture. The film is tentatively scheduled to premiere in early 2002.

### The Weather Underground

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco

Project Director: Sam Green

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

The Weather Underground was an organization of idealistic young Americans who—outraged by the Vietnam War and racism in America—attempted to spark a revolution in the U.S. during the '60s and '70s. As a movement, the Weather Underground was an anomaly: a group of primarily white middle-class youth who literally subordinated their lives to the pursuit of drastic social change. As the public grew mortified by the group's violence, often labeling them as terrorists, many Leftists felt that the Weathermen did more to discredit the Left than to move it forward. This award will help support post-production and publicity for a feature-length film that marks the first time since the group dissolved in the late '70s that members have agreed to speak about their experiences.

## RADIO

### Southern California Indians Radio Project

Sponsor: KPCC, Pasadena

Project Director: Ilsa Setziol

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

This media grant will help fund scholars' honoraria and staffing for a five-part radio series about Southern California Indians. The series will give Californians an opportunity to hear directly from local Indians through both location reports and live, in-studio discussions between scholars, tribal leaders, and community members. Themes explored in the series will include U.S. and California treaties and laws affecting the contemporary lives of Southern California Indians; historic and contemporary California Indian worldviews; the efforts of Southern California Indians to preserve and revive their languages and cultures; the impact that the campaign for gaming, and the establishment of gaming itself, has had on Southern California Indian communities; and efforts by Indian filmmakers to turn America's attention from images of Indians as historic artifacts to portraits of the lives of contemporary Indian people. KPCC will air the series on the third Wednesday of each month, from April through August of 2001.



# WINTER Calendar

The public humanities programs and exhibits listed on these two pages were either created or supported by the California Council for the Humanities. Please note that dates and times should be confirmed with the local sponsors. These listings are often provided to CCH well before final arrangements are made.

Please also check the monthly calendar listings on the Council's world wide web pages at [www.calhum.org/calendar.html](http://www.calhum.org/calendar.html).

## EXHIBITS

**Nov. 4 – Feb. 18** "Gold Fever! Untold Stories of the California Gold Rush" is the Council-commissioned, multi-dimensional traveling exhibit about the California Gold Rush, adapted from the Oakland Museum's major "Gold Fever!" exhibit, with additional displays about the Gold Rush's impact on Santa Paula. Union Oil Museum, 1001 East Main St., Santa Paula. 805/933-0076.

**Jan. 4 – Feb. 25** "In This Land" explores contemporary rural life in California's Great Central Valley. Thirty photographs by Matthew Black are complemented by oral history captured by Samuel Orozco. Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. 559/686-2074.

**Jan. 19 – Feb. 26** "Awakening from the California Dream." Robert Dawson's photographs and Gray Brechin's texts explore the history behind, and possible hopes for averting, California's environmental crises. Turtle Bay Museums and Arboretum on the River, 56 Quartz Hill Rd., Redding. 530/242-3135.



Artist's Installation of Farmers in Field, near Salinas. From the "Awakening from the California Dream" exhibit. (Photo by Robert Dawson).

**Jan. 27 – Apr. 6** "Exploring Identity through Poetry and Pictures" features the research and creativity of a group of community-based writers and artists called Poetrio. Includes an exhibition of paintings and photographs, a free interpretive gallery guide and a series of public programs, with a "Poetry Salon" on Apr. 5. Museum of History and Art, 225 South Euclid Ave., Ontario. 909/983-3198.

**Jan. 29 – Mar. 2, 2001** "Votes For Women: Unfinished Business," chronicles women's struggle for political equality in the U.S. Ukiah Civic Center, 300 Seminary Ave., Ukiah. 707/467-2836.

**Feb. 2001** Three-month exhibit of North Coast History. Davenport Resource Service Center, 100 Church St., Davenport. 831/425-8115.

**Mar. 1 – Apr. 1** "In This Land" (see Jan. 4, above). Community Memorial Museum of Sutter City, 1333 Butte House Rd., Yuba City. 530/822-7141.

**Mar. 10 – Apr. 23** "Awakening from the California Dream" (see Jan. 19, above). McHenry Museum, 1402 I St., Modesto. 209/491-4317.

**Mar. 24 – May 19** "Votes For Women: Unfinished Business" (see Jan. 29, above). Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. 559/686-2074.



Face-painting. From the "Passing on the Traditions" exhibit. (Courtesy of the Historical Society of Long Beach)

**Apr. 1 – May 25** "Passing on the Traditions" documents, in photos and narrative, how the diverse cultures in Southern California pass on their traditions and maintain their cultural identities, including the Gabrielino/Tongva Indians, and Americans of Mexican, African, Cambodian, Filipino, and Jewish descent. Historical Society of Long Beach. 562/495-1210.

**Apr. 7 – Jun. 8** "In This Land" (see Jan. 4 above). Kern County Museum, 3801 Chester Ave., Bakersfield. 661/861-2132.

## EVENTS

**Feb. 2001** Living Biographies: Forum in Eureka for Wiyot and descendents of non-Native settlers to acknowledge Indian Island massacre. 707/445-0813.

**Feb. 2001** Discussion of the community history collection process and the Boyle Heights public symposium. Japanese American National Museum. 213/625-0414, x5717.

**Feb. 2001** Living Biographies: Pan-tribal forum co-sponsored by the United Indian Health Services at Arcata community center, with live cable TV and radio hook-up. 707/445-0813.

**Feb. 3** Scholar/performer Susheel Bibbs portrays Mary Ellen Pleasant, who was born a slave and became known as the "Mother of Civil Rights in California," in a CCH History Alive! Chautauqua program. Time TBA. African American Historical & Cultural Museum, 1857 Fulton St., Fresno. 559/268-7102.

**Feb. 4** Riverside Public Library continues a reading-and-discussion series based on Charles Dickens' *The Adventures of Oliver Twist*. Discussion with Dickens' scholar Kate Watt. 2-4 p.m. RPL Main Library Auditorium, 3581 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside. 909/826-5201.

**Feb. 7** The Marin Museum of the American Indian's eight-part lecture series, held on the first Weds. of each month, will explore *Indian Survival of the California Frontier*, featuring nine California scholars whose work has focused on the enduring cultures of California's Indigenous peoples. Tonight Justin Farmer lectures on "Chinigchinish, A Native Religion." 7 p.m. Marin Art and Garden Center, Ross. 415/897-4064.

**Feb. 7** Frame by Frame: Building Communities through Cinema, the San Diego Public Library's second annual film/video and discussion series to find unity in the community's diversity. City Heights Weingart Library and Performing Annex, 3795 Fairmount Ave., San Diego. 619/236-5821.



# Humanities News

## CCH Board to Meet in San Diego in March

The California Council for the Humanities' next quarterly board meeting will be held at the Catamaran Hotel in San Diego on March 15-17, 2001. For additional information, please contact the Council's San Francisco office at 415/391-1474.

## CCH's Redesigned Web Site Launched

CCH has a newly improved home on the Web: the Council's redesigned site, [www.calhum.org](http://www.calhum.org), will be launched in early February 2001. In addition to getting a facelift by Web designer Mari Fuentes, the site has been restructured to allow easier access to information about the Council's projects and news:

- More grants information: The complete 2000 *Grant Guidelines and Application Materials* are on-line, along with PDF files of forms. Write-ups of recent awards and information about "Grantees in the News" have been added.
- Recent features from *Humanities Network*, including relevant links and additional material not appearing in the print newsletter, are now on-line.
- Expanded sections for the Council's various projects, such as CERA and the Language Is Life/Renewal Project, are now easily accessed from the home page.
- The California Humanities Network's web site, [www.thinkcalifornia.net](http://www.thinkcalifornia.net), is now more tightly integrated with [calhum.org](http://calhum.org).

The original [calhum.org](http://calhum.org) was first launched in 1995, back in the initial days of the World Wide Web. Five years ago, one of the site's first features—a collaboration between CCH and the SF Museum of Modern Art entitled *Crossing the Frontier: Photographs of the Developing West, 1899 to the Present*—was named a "Site of the Week" by *Atlantic Monthly* and as a "Pick of the Moment" by *texas.net* Museum of Art. This on-line photo exhibit is still accessible on the redesigned [calhum.org](http://calhum.org).

## Chautauqua Grants Still Available

"Chautauqua" presentations are a dynamic way for audiences of all ages to question some of our history's most colorful figures face-to-face. In CCH's *History Alive! Chautauqua* programs, scholar/performers portray one of 13 diverse characters from California's Gold-Rush era, first telling their stories and taking questions in character, and then breaking character to offer a contemporary perspective on the character's life and times.

Visit [www.calhum.org](http://www.calhum.org) for a complete list of characters, or call chautauqua coordinator Joan Jasper toll-free at 888/543-4434 for information about applying for a grant and scheduling a *History Alive! Chautauqua* in your community.

## Chautauqua in the Schools Pilot Project in L.A.

As CCH's three-year *Rediscovering California at 150* (RC150) theme comes to a close, the Council is launching a *Chautauqua in the Schools* pilot project that will extend the life of the chautauqua component of RC150.

The program, which has been developed in consultation with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), is being directed by program officer Felicia Kelley and RC150 consultant Joan Jasper. Special curriculum materials, which help prepare both teachers and students for the performances, were developed with education consultant Laura Wilde; all materials meet the California history standards for fourth and fifth grade students.

Funding is currently available for 20 schools in the Los Angeles area; the cost to these schools will be \$250. Five chautauqua performers—Yee Fung Cheung, Pio Pico, John Sutter, Biddy Mason, and Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo—are available to give performances. Chautauquas must be scheduled eight weeks in advance. For more information, contact Joan Jasper toll-free at 888/543-4434.

## Grantees in the News

*Alcatraz Is Not An Island: The American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island, 1969-1971*, a film about the Indian occupation of Alcatraz, will screen this year at the Sundance Film Festival. The 56-minute documentary, produced by Millie Ketcheshawno (Mvskoke) and Jon Plutte, and directed by James M. Fortier, also won the Best Documentary Feature Award at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Film Festival.

*Hollywood Confronts Fascism*, Howard Aaron's feature-length documentary tracing the multicultural history of Hollywood and the Hollywood Left around WWII, recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Oregon Council for the Humanities. The film will provide a complex portrait of the origination and political activities of such groups as the Motion Picture Democratic Committee and the American Nazi Party. The project received a major grant from CCH last summer.

*Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey*, a documentary film by Bill and Louise Greaves, is scheduled to air as a prime time special on PBS during Black History Month, February 2001. Dr. Ralph Johnson Bunche (1903-1971) was the first African-American and the first person of color to win the Nobel Peace Prize, an honor he received in 1950 in recognition of his successful mediation of the Armistice Agreements between the Arab nations and Israel. The two-hour documentary is narrated by Sidney Poitier.

## In Memorium:



## Jeannie Mac Gregor

Jeannie Mac Gregor began working for CCH in the spring of 1991. She had recently moved to California from Rhode Island, where she had worked with the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities (RICH) for nearly a decade. RICH Executive Director Tom Roberts wrote me a long letter in which he praised her work extravagantly, but as I came to know, with complete accuracy. "Her work has elicited superlatives from scholars, business, the media, the RICH board and staff—none of whom is very easy to please," he wrote. "I am confident that her intelligence, her energy, her thoroughness and her temperament would make her as effective and compatible a member of your staff as she was of mine."

These were prescient words. During her eight years with CCH, first as a program officer, later as an assistant director, Jeannie's work was characterized by warmth and enthusiasm. Some people create networks; Jeannie seemed to create an extended family. People whom she counseled, people she worked with in the special projects she directed—like *Highway 99* and the Sesquicentennial Chautauqua projects—all of them felt Jeannie's special touch.

Jeannie left the Council staff in March 1999 to dedicate herself fully to the battle with breast cancer. The disease may have killed her, but it never defeated her. Her spirit was an inspiration to us who knew her and, of course, she continued to make new friends even through her treatment.

Jeannie died peacefully in her sleep sometime during the early morning of December 22, 2000, holding her husband Mark's hand. She was 56 years old. As Auden wrote about Yeats, Jeannie has now become her admirers. She leaves behind that large "extended family" who miss and mourn her but who will never forget her. In a group photograph, Jeannie is always at the center. She was a kind of emotional campfire, whose warmth gathered people around her. CCH is a better place for Jeannie's having been among us, but right now, without her, we're all feeling the cold.

Jeannie most wanted to be honored through donations to Commonweal, and contributions in her name can be sent to support scholarships for the Cancer Help Program to Commonweal, Box 316, Bolinas, CA 94924.

— Jim Quay

## Proposal Workshops Offered

The Council's program staff conducts proposal-writing workshops for people interested in applying to the Council's grant program. Council funding is available for public humanities projects, including lectures, exhibits, reading-and-discussion groups, film festivals, conferences, and symposia. The next deadline for major grants is April 1, 2001.

All proposal-writing workshops are free, but advance registration is required as space is often limited. When calling the office nearest you for reservations and the latest information on times and locations, please also request and read the current 2000 *Grant Guidelines and Application Materials* before attending the workshop. (See back page for contact information.)

## OAH's Convention in L.A. in April

The Organization of American Historians will hold its 94<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Los Angeles on April 26-29, 2000. This year's meeting, with the theme of "Connections: Rethinking Our Audiences," will feature more than 120 panels on American history, including multiple sessions on California and the West. The OAH is the largest learned society devoted to the study of American history. The complete program and registration form is on-line at <http://www.oah.org>; for more information call 812/855-7311 or e-mail [meetings@oah.org](mailto:meetings@oah.org).



# Membership and Development News

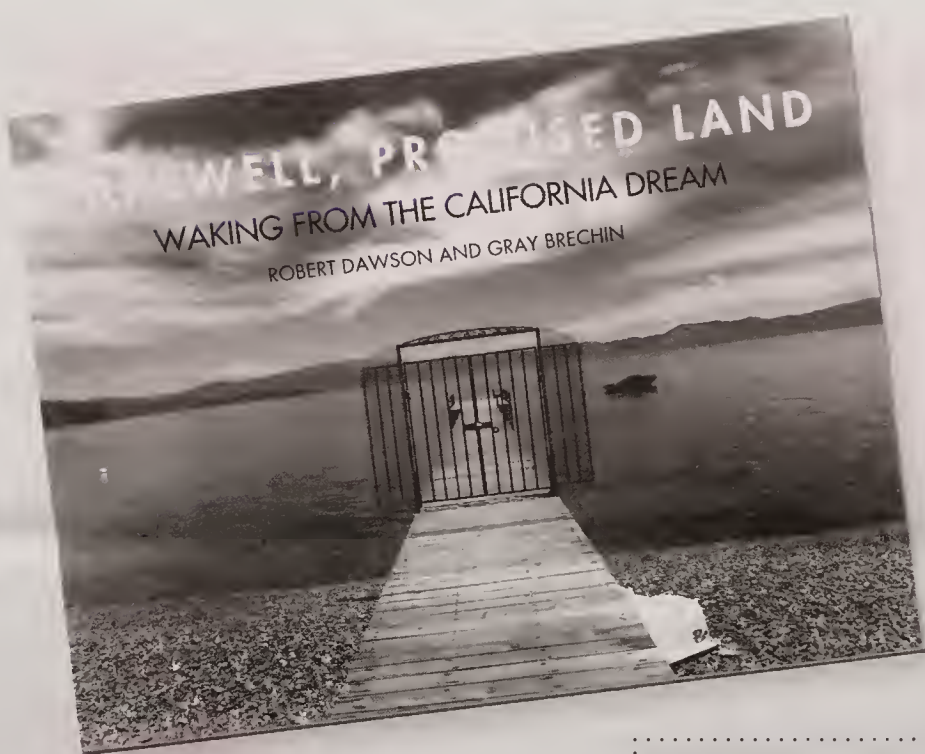
## Your Membership Support Is Vital

THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES—the *only* statewide organization devoted to public humanities programming throughout California—is supported through a public-private partnership that includes individual, government, institutional, and corporate support.



Please join us today with a 2001 membership to ensure that we're able to continue offering the kind of important and exciting programming that you've read about in this and other issues of *Humanities Network*:

- *Awakening from the California Dream*—the first exhibit and educational program of its kind devoted to California's changing environmental landscape
- *The MOTHEREAD/FATHEREAD Family Literacy Project*
- *The Language Is Life/Renewal Project* for Native California
- *The History Alive! Chautauqua Program* for Public Schools
- And our *Grants Program*, which continues to provide early pivotal funding for projects such as the academy award-nominated film *Regret to Inform*, and *The Legacy*, filmmaker Michael J. Moore's examination of the impact of California's Three Strikes Law.



Your partnership is vital to our ability to encourage the kind of dialogue and understanding that will make this a more fit state for our children and grandchildren, so please join us with your 2001 membership gift today.

- If you're able to give a gift of \$75 or more, we'll be pleased to send you a signed copy of the critically acclaimed *Farewell Promised Land: Waking from the California Dream*, featuring the photographs of Robert Dawson, with accompanying text by Gray Brechin.

Just send in the coupon below with your membership gift, or give us a call at 415/391-1474.

### 2001 FRIENDS OF THE HUMANITIES - NEW MEMBER

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If you have any questions, please call Julie Levak, Director of Development, at 415/391-1474



